

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
BENEFIT ISSUANCE

TANF CASH ASSISTANCE

Subject:
Expungement of EBT Benefits

Supersedes: TANF 1203-1 (07/01/05)

References: ARM 37.78.101; 37.78.102; MCA 17-8-303

GENERAL RULE - Warrants issued for the Department of Public Health and Human Services, funded to any extent with federal money, must be presented for payment within 180 days after the date of issue. After that, the warrant is considered **stale dated** and can no longer be cashed. TANF cash benefits received via an EBT card are considered, in this instance, to be the same as a benefit issued by a paper check

At the application interview, the Eligibility Case Manager must include an explanation of the policy regarding 'expungement of benefits after the period of inactivity'. It would be appropriate as part of the discussion of the optional payment methods.

Checks will no longer be issued for expunged benefits through DPHHS. The participant can retrieve remaining benefit amounts greater than \$10 through the Department of Administration's stale-dated warrant process.

NOTE: A balance of less than \$10 will be **permanently expunged** at the end of the month in which the 180th day occurs. The '**stale-dated warrant**' procedure is not available in this situation.

PROCEDURE

On the first day of each month, a report (EBT1735R--Benefits Aging-TANF Cash) is generated and made available on Document Direct. The report lists the participants' names, TEAMS numbers, and the amounts remaining on every TANF EBT card that has had **no activity in the past 160 days**. Once the report is received, every effort must be made to contact the family and offer assistance. Example: If mail has been returned with a forwarding address or you know they are still living in the area, try to make contact.

A system generated notice (A812) is sent to the participant the first of the month following the 160th day, informing them that they have 20 days to use their card or the remaining benefits will be expunged. If the participant activates the card, they are removed from the report and the 180-day time frame starts over.

If the participant does not activate the card, a second system generated notice (A813) is sent to the participants on the 20th of the month informing them that the benefits have been expunged.

EXAMPLE: On August 1st, Wendie shows up on the report as not having used her card for 160 days. She has a \$150 balance. The (A812) notice is sent to her on August 1st informing her that she has until August 20th to use her EBT card or her benefits will be expunged on August 31st. On August 20th, the second notice (A813) is sent out. Wendie does not use her card and her benefits are expunged.

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The first week of each month, the TANF policy specialist e-mails a report to the Business and Financial Services Division (Fiscal) listing each case that has had \$10.00 or more expunged from their EBT account. The report includes the Social Security number and the amount of the expungement. At the same time, the TANF policy specialist sends a letter to each individual listed on the report explaining the process to recover the expunged benefits.

If the participant contacts the Office of Public Assistance after receiving the A813, or the follow-up letter from the TANF Policy Specialist, and wants to access the stale dated benefits (must be over \$10.00), please provide the Business and Financial Services Division (BFSD) phone number (406-444-4059). A member of their staff will work with Department of Administration (DOA) to assist with the expunged benefit recovery process. The participant will need the information included in the follow-up letter from the TANF Policy Specialist when they contact BFSD.

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